General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 February 2003

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 104

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/57/551)*]

57/187. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of his Office[1] and the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fifty-third session[2] and the conclusions and decisions contained therein,

Recalling its previous annual resolutions on the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since its establishment by the General Assembly,

Expressing its appreciation for the leadership shown by the High Commissioner, and commending the staff and implementing partners of the Office of the High Commissioner for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities,

1. *Endorses* the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fifty-third session;[2]

2. *Welcomes* the important work undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner and its Executive Committee in the course of the year and notes in this context the conclusion on the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum,[3] the conclusion on reception of asylum-seekers in the context of individual asylum systems[4] and the progress achieved with respect to recognizing the important contribution of host developing countries; welcomes also the importance attached to cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development;[5] welcomes further the active engagement of the Office of the High Commissioner in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/57/12).

[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/57/12/Add.1).

[3] Ibid., chap. III, sect. C.

[4] Ibid., sect. B.

[5] A/57/304, annex.

in Humanitarian Crises and the drafting of a policy on sexual exploitation, and encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to continue combating such practices; and welcomes the renewed efforts made by the Office of the High Commissioner to promote durable solutions for refugees;

3. *Notes* that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[6] and the 1967 Protocol thereto[7] have continuously served as the cornerstone of the international refugee protection regime, and welcomes in this context the Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of States Parties to the Convention and/or its Protocol, held at Geneva on 12 and 13 December 2001,[8] to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention, as an expression of their collective commitment to full and effective implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and to the values they embody;

4. *Reaffirms* that the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol thereto remain the foundation of the international refugee regime and recognizes the importance of their full application by States parties, notes with satisfaction that one hundred and forty-four States are now parties to one instrument or to both, encourages States not parties to consider acceding to those instruments, underlines in particular the importance of full respect for the principle of non-refoulement, and recognizes that a number of States not parties to the international refugee instruments have shown a generous approach to hosting refugees;

5. *Notes* that fifty-four States are now parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons[9] and that twenty-six States are parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,[10] and encourages the High Commissioner to continue his activities on behalf of stateless persons;

6. *Welcomes* the contribution of the process of Global Consultations on International Protection to strengthening the international framework for refugee protection and to equipping States better to address the challenges in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, and welcomes in this connection the Agenda for Protection;[11]

7. *Reiterates* that international protection is a dynamic and action-oriented function, carried out in cooperation with States and other partners, inter alia, to promote and facilitate the admission, reception and treatment of refugees and to ensure durable, protection-oriented solutions, bearing in mind the particular needs of vulnerable groups;

8. *Re-emphasizes* that the protection of refugees is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions;

9. *Urges* all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, in a spirit of international

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[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[7] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[8] HCR/MMSP/2001/10, annex I.

[9] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 360, No. 5158.

[10] Ibid., vol. 989, No. 14458.

[11] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/57/12/Add.1), annex IV.

solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, to cooperate and to mobilize resources with a view to enhancing the capacity of and reducing the heavy burden borne by countries that have received large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to play its catalytic role in mobilizing assistance from the international community to address the root causes as well as the economic, environmental and social impact of large-scale refugee populations in developing countries, particularly least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition;

10. *Strongly reaffirms* the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the High Commissioner of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to refugee problems, recalls that these solutions include voluntary repatriation and, where appropriate and feasible, local integration and resettlement in a third country, reaffirming that voluntary repatriation remains the preferred solution, supported by necessary rehabilitation and development assistance to facilitate sustainable reintegration;

11. *Emphasizes* the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons to be undertaken in a safe and humane manner and with full respect for their human rights and dignity, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned;

12. *Recognizes* that adequate and timely resources are essential for the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to fulfil the mandate conferred upon it through its statute,[12] and by subsequent General Assembly resolutions concerning refugees and other persons of concern, and urges Governments and other donors to respond promptly to the global appeal issued by the Office for requirements under its annual programme budget;

13. *Requests* the High Commissioner to report on his activities to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

77th plenary meeting
18 December 2002

[12] Resolution 428 (V), annex.